

# **Teacher's Method Used for Reading on Phonics Level to Young Learners**

## **THESIS**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
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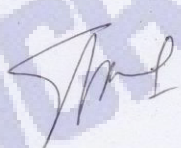
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## INTRODUCTION

Bilingual education is one of the happening issues in education area in Indonesia. Many primary schools adapt bilingual education program and use English as their daily communication. This issue is a debatable issue for some people and it is affecting in various opinion about it. Some of them agree but some disagree with bilingual education program especially to young learner because of their nationalisms and preferences of using Indonesia to using English. Despite of those two different opinions regarding bilingual education program, introducing English to young learner is still a need. In short, we could introduce English as early as possible but only on the Basic English. For example, introduce reading English skill to young learner in a basic concept or basic level – Phonics.

Introducing phonics to young learners is not a simple thing especially for Indonesian young learners who already learn letter-sound in Indonesian version. Moreover, there are many differences letter-sound between Indonesian and English. For example the letter-sound of “U” in Indonesia and English, in Indonesia we say /u/ like “mulut” however in English it can be /ʌ/ like when we say cup /k ʌ p/ or it can be /I/ like in busy /b I s i/. Indonesian learner will confuse to recognize those differences sound.

In teaching phonics, we should have some approaches of methods that would be applied in classroom activity, and there are some researchers who already investigated about phonics method. The first research came from Johnston and Watson (2005). They investigated the effects of the use of synthetics phonics on reading and spelling. For this study, they need seven year-long of study and then they found that five-year-old children had better word reading, spelling and synthetic phonics awareness skills than children who get a supplementary analytic phonics program.

Another researcher who interested in this field is Callinan and Zee (2010). They tried to compare two schools that use different approaches: Jolly phonics (JP) and Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills (THRASS) which is came from one big name method (synthetic phonics method). Those two schools taught four to five years old learners and they observe over a one-year period. The result shown that learners reading ability more improved in school which is used JP than THRASS.

From those two studies, shown that the best method for young learners is Synthetic Phonics however the researcher is questioning, is it applicable for Indonesian young learners? That is why the researcher interesting in this field because, even though bilingual education is spreading on every big cities in Indonesia but there is a few study about phonics methods.

From that fact, the aim of this study is to investigate the phonics method used in TK-KB Bethany as one example of primary school in Salatiga that adapt bilingual education program and teach phonics for their learners and the way teacher deliver the material using the phonics method(s). Even though the same method cannot be applied for every young learners, but hopefully teacher try to apply the method by improvement according to the learners needs. Later on, the finding of this study can be used as a reference for other bilingual school or parents who want to introduce English in basic steps for their children.

After all, the researcher conduct this study to answer two research question about teaching Phonics to young learners, they are: (a) What method(s) used in teaching phonics for young learners in TK-KB Bethany School? And (b) What does the teacher do in using that method?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Teaching Reading English to Young Learners

Before discussing deeper about teaching reading and teaching phonics, it would be better if we know about whom young learner are, their characteristics, and how to deal with them. Young learners have different classification from different researcher. According to Ersoz (2007), there are three classifications of young learner. First classification is children in pre-school and kindergarten level (3 – 6 years old) as very young learners. Second, children in 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of elementary school (7 – 9 years old) as young learners. Last, children in 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade of elementary school (10 – 12 years old) we call them as the late young learners. Different with Slatterly and Willis (2001, as cited in Shin 2006) who claimed that all students in elementary school (7-12 years old) as young learners and students in kindergarten level (under 7 years old) as very young learners.

After we identify and classify them, we have to know about their characteristics. According to Hamer (2007), young learners try to respond about what teacher asks even though they do not understand about the question. Then they learn a new thing around them indirectly. Young learners are also more understand while we show the real example rather than explain it, for example when we teach about fruit as the teacher, we can bring an orange or an apple for the class activity and ask them to touch and taste those fruits and ask them about the taste of those fruits. They also have big curiosity, imagination, like to talk about themselves and get bored to the uninteresting topic easily.

In English class, we are recognizing four skills, they are: listening, speaking, reading, and also writing. For some people, reading sounds like a simple thing to do in the classroom, but in fact reading is the difficult thing especially for young learner. Why this skill is difficult? Because we as a reader should be able to understand not only the meaning of each word, but also understand the whole text. Shaywitz (2003) define reading skill as “an extraordinary ability, peculiarly human and yet distinctly unnatural...acquired in childhood, forms an intrinsic part of our

existence as human beings, and is taken for granted by most of us.” (p. 3) To understand the whole text, Pinnell (2008), try to divide reading into five areas or essential components, they are: (a) Phonemic awareness instruction (is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the discrete sounds in spoken words). In the next level, we have (b) phonics instruction (teaching children the relationships between letters and individual sounds). After students can deal with phonics level, teacher will go to the next level, (c) fluency instruction (the ability to read a text quickly and accurately). They students should know the meaning of every words that they learn, that is why they should learn (d) vocabulary (refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively with the text). In addition, the last level is (e) comprehension instruction (the ability to understand the whole text that the reader read).

However, from those areas sometimes children faced some difficulties in reading a text, the teacher should help them to understand the text that they read. Teacher has to do something to help them facing some difficulties in reading, such as: raise students’ awareness of the importance of the text’s syntactic elements as an important contributor to comprehension (here the achievement will be achieve by a number of students’ exercises in reading text). Teacher also teaches reading as problem identification (the students need help while at the reading stage, teacher should help students to identify the problem in reading and train them to solve it). Besides help them to identify the problem, teacher help students become strategic readers (think-aloud method is a useful tool to start with, it means students begin to more interactive in reading a text, teacher should help them and monitor the students to understand the text) (Brashdi, 2002).

Besides the strategies from Brashdi, department of education in 2007 explain some strategies that useful while teaching reading. Firstly, use word-attract skills (how to work out the meaning of unfamiliar word). Secondly, comprehension -how to make meaning-(it used to



monitor their understanding in reading the text). Thirdly, read aloud (here teacher should read the text to the whole class). Fourthly, make a group guided reading (teacher divide the student into small group discussion according to their ability in reading). Moreover, the last strategy is help them to be an independent reader (here teacher ask the students to choose the book that they want to read according to their interest).

### Teaching English Reading on Phonics Level to Young Learner

Before discuss deeper about methods in teaching phonics, it would be better if we understand first what phonics is. An online oxford dictionary (2015) defines Phonics as “a method of teaching people to read by correlating sounds with symbol in an alphabetic writing system”. Another definition from Department for Education (2013) said that:

*“Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skillfully. They are taught how to: recognize the sounds that each individual letter makes; identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make – such as ‘sh’ or ‘oo’; and blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word. Children can then use this knowledge to ‘de-code’ new words that they hear or see. this is the first important step in learning to read.”*

Phonics refers to the relationship between letters (graphemes) and sounds (phonemes) in written words (Mesmer & Griffith 2005). In alphabetic system we know that there are 26 letters (graphemes) to represent about 44 sounds (phonemes). According to Bald (2007:10 as cited in Phajane, 2014), Phonics approach is learning to read by encouraging children to decode words by pronounce the sounds of letter by letter, rather than by recognizing whole words.

Ehri (2003) define Phonics as “a method of instruction that teaches students correspondences between graphemes in written language and phonemes in spoken language and how to use these correspondences to read and spell words”. She also state that systematic Phonics instruction is

*“When all the major grapheme-phoneme correspondences are taught and they are covered in a clearly defined sequence. This includes short and long vowels as well as vowel and*

*consonant digraphs such as oi, ea, sh, th. Also it may include blends of letter-sounds that form larger subunits in words such as onsets and rimes”.*

Teaching phonics is not as simple as provide some words and give the example to spell the words, there are many consideration for the teacher to deliver the material. The teacher should understand the students difficulties and strategy that appropriate to the students. In short, Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, and Tarver (2004) tried to find out some methods use in teaching Phonics. They are:

***Synthetic Phonics*** (Children learn how to convert letters or letter combinations into sounds, and then how to blend the sounds together to form recognizable words.). Bald (2007) define synthetic phonics as an approach where children try to recognize letter-sound by letter-sound and blend them to be a full word. E.g children learn letter-sound of “p”, “e”, and “n” then blend it together to be a word “pen”. Ehri (2003) called this method as “a part-to-whole approach”.

***Analytic phonics*** (Children learn to analyze letter-sounds relationships in previously learned words. They do not pronounce sounds in isolation.). Ehri (2003) called this method as “a whole-to-part approach” and she explain that this method teach children to

*“Analyze letter-sound relations once the word is identified. For example, the teacher might write the letter P followed by several words, put, pig, play, pet. Teacher would help students read the words and recognize that they all begin with the same sound that is associated with P.”*

***Analogy-based phonics*** (Children learn to use parts of word families they know to identify words they do not know that have similar parts.). Ehri (2003) believes that this method used to

*“Teach children to use parts of written words they already know to identify new words. For example, they are taught a set of key words that are posted on the wall(e.g., lent, make, pig) and then are taught to use parts of these words to decode unfamiliar words by pronouncing the shared rime and blending it with the new onset (e.g., rent, hake, lig)”.*

***Phonics through spelling*** (Children learn to segment words into phonemes and to make words by writing letters for phonemes.). Based on Marlene and McCracken (2012), defined it as “a multilevel phonics and spelling strategy that allows for the inclusion of phonics without it being the sole component of learning to read” besides that Ehri (2003) also state that “Phonics-through-spelling programs teach children to segment and write the phonemes in words.”

***Embedded phonics*** (Children learn the letter-sound relationships during the reading of connected text. (Since children encounter different letter-sound relationships as they read, this approach is not systematic or explicit.)). This method is usually used together with the whole language method of learning to read.

***Onset-rime phonics*** (Children learn to identify the sound of the letter or letters before the first vowel (the onset) in a one-syllable word and the sound of the remaining part of the word (the rime)). Korkowski (2013) said that this method is “one of the “parts” of the whole-part-whole reading instructions. “Parts” of the chosen text are analyzed to find pattern that will unlock the decoding process”.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Context of the Study**

This study conduct in TK-KB Bethany School Salatiga, this school has some class for different level (mom and baby class, toddler class, pre-school class, kindergarten A class, and also kindergarten B class) and this study will specific for students from kindergarten B level. For kindergarten B class there will be two classes, Noah class and Daniel class. The researcher observe Kindergarten B (Noah class) because, they are learning phonics in this semester before move to the next level of reading skill in the following semester.



## **Participants**

The participant of this study is teacher from TK-KB Bethany School Salatiga. One teacher from Noah class is the participant in this study. She has been teaching for more than three years in that school. In this class, there would be two teachers to handle the students. Every teacher has their own job description for teaching the students. Teacher who participate as the participant is a Language teacher (English and Indonesian) and experience, the other one teach Bible story, show and tell, and sport. Those two teachers teach 16 students.

## **Data Collection Instrument**

For this study, the researcher collects the data from the teachers accurately by doing classroom observation. The best way is observation because to know the method that teacher use, the researcher should observe the classroom activity and the material given directly. For the observtion, the researcher is going to use event sampling protocol and observe for six times. The researcher is going to develop her own protocol. At the end of the observation, the researcher can describe the method that they use.

To observe the class, some main points that going to observe are: how the teachers deliver the material, how they give an example (the way teacher pronounce the letter-sound), what exercise that teachers used to measure students understanding, and how the teacher make the class interesting for the students and what instrument that teacher used in class (picture, games, flash card, etc.).

## **Data collection procedures**

Firstly, the researcher had a pre observation to know the background of the school, the students that they handle in that school, and the background of the teachers as the participant. Then, the researcher came to the class to see directly the students and the classroom activity.

This pre-observation held for two times. After that, the researcher started to observe the class and made a note for every activity in the class. After finished the observation, the researcher describe and analyze the data collection.

### **Data analysis procedures**

The researcher compared the note taking data and data from observation protocol sheet to make sure the method use in a day. Then, the researcher described the data in the finding and discussion. The description are the method use, the similarities or differences or modification of the method use from the references, response from the students during the activities, and the students understanding from the way they did their exercise. Then from the data, the researcher can classify the method used in their classroom activity based on the explanation of the phonics method from the references and also the researcher can explain the procedure of the material given in each day.

### **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

After the observation, the researcher can answer the research questions. From the first research question, the researcher sought to investigate the method use in teaching phonics for kindergarten B learner in TK-KB Bethany School. Moreover, the second research question, the researcher tries to describe the procedure of the classroom activity.

After the six weeks of observation (every week have one day for teaching phonics) the researcher found that the teacher use different method in every weeks. In addition, different with some previous study that the researcher found before, this school did not use synthetic phonics like those two studies before. For the further explanation, it can be seen from the table and the description.

No	Phonics Method	Week					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Synthetic Phonics	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Analytic Phonics	-	√	√	-	-	-
3	Analogy-based Phonics	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	Phonics through Spelling	-	-	√	-	√	√
5	Embedded Phonics	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Onset-rime Phonics	-	-	-	√	-	-
7	Other	√	-	-	-	-	-

**Table 1. Phonics method used in Bethany School**

### Phonics through spelling

Phonics through spelling is the method used by the teacher to teach on week three, five, and six. This method can be explained as a program where the teacher teaches children to segment and write the phonemes in words (Ehri, 2003). While apply this method, teacher did not only ask the students to pronounce and memorize the letter but also ask the students to write the correct letter.

On week three letter-sound that teacher use are 'a', 'i', 'u', and 'e'. For the very first step to teach those letter-sounds, teacher and students sang letter-land song from A-Z. Then, for the second times, teacher played and paused in the letter that students learn that day (while play and pause teacher repeat the sound of every letter and ask the students to follow the teacher). After that, teacher showed 'hut', 'nut', 'pin', 'pig', 'mat', and 'hat' picture (in this step, teacher show the picture first, then pronounce the word by emphasizing on the middle sound and ask the students to repeat the teacher). Teacher repeated to pronounce it and the students follow it together for two times then teacher asked some students to pronounce it one by one after that the teacher point out the middle letter and ask the sound. Then the last step, teacher asked students two by two to do the exercise. In this step student did not only fill the blank space but teacher ask the students to pronounce the word according to the picture first then student choose and circle the correct letter below the blank space and write it down on the space given. For example



question number two, teacher provide 'nut' picture with the word n\_\_t. Below the \_\_, teacher provide u/e and students should choose the correct letter and write it on the \_\_.

On the week five, teacher did not only ask the student to pronounce, memorize, and write the correct letter-sound, but also they should write the correct letter without guidance or choices like in the week three. In this week teacher provide letter 'p' for pin, 'c' for cup, 'd' for dog, 'b' for bug, and 'p' for pig. At the beginning of the class, teacher tried to draw the picture and pronounce the word. Later on, teacher wrote down the word on the whiteboard and asked the students to repeat the word. Then teacher called the student one by one to make a mini three-letter-word book. Teacher provides a paper with five pictures and word with two empty letters. As the researcher said before, in this level, there is no guidance to choose or write the correct letter. Then, after finished all the words, teacher asked the students to cut the paper according to the line given then students can asked the teacher to help them use stapler.

On the week six, it was similar with week five. There is no guidance to write and choose the correct letter. The picture given are 'v' for van, 'h' for hug, 'p' for pig and pan, 'd' for dig, and 'b' for bug. The procedures were quite similar with week five, but in this week the students did not need to make it into a mini three-letter-word book. On those three weeks, we can see that teacher have different way to deliver the material. On the week three as the starter point for the students to write a letter according to the right letter-sound, teacher try to give guidance for the students to choose the correct letter then write it down on the space given based on the chosen letter. On the week five and six, teacher tried to make it was more difficult for the students because they should remember the letter-sound and the letter without guidance. However, on week five, teacher made it was fun so students did not bored to work on it.

During the learning activity, the researcher saw that students face some difficulties to do the exercise given on the week five and week six because they should remember two letters for each number. Whereas, on the week three which is the students only need to memorize the letter-sound and match it with the letter given is quite difficult for them. In short, it was more acceptable if they are difficult to do the exercise on week five and six. Besides that difficulty, the researcher think that this method is the most suitable method to introduce not only reading skill (in this case phonics level), but also to introduce

writing skill because students can learn to analyze the differences between the letter and letter-sound. Especially for Indonesian young learners who have different letter-sound system with English system. Take for example, letter 'u'. Indonesian usually pronounces it as 'u', however in English it would be pronounce 'a' like 'nut', 'umbrella', etc. This method is quite effective for learning process but before apply this method, teacher should apply it step by step. For example we can see on the week three, teacher give one empty letter with choices. Then it would be better if on the next week teacher give a word with two empty letter and choices. After that to go to the higher level, teacher can give word with one empty letter without guidance and on the next week, teacher provide one letter with two empty letter without guidance. In my opinion teacher A jumped the step and it made the students difficult to follow the material on week five and six.

### Analytic Phonics

The next method found to be used by the teacher is analytic phonics, Ehri (2003) called it as a whole-to-part approach where the teacher give a word then break it down into letter-sound. It can be seen on week two and three because on the exercise sheet, the teacher provided some words with one empty letter (on week two the empty letter is the first sound but on the week three the empty letter is the middle sound). Teacher used the same procedure while delivering the method but different words between those two weeks. On week two the teacher provided letter 'c' for cat, 'm' for mat, 'l' for log, 'd' for dog, 'f' for fan, and 'p' for pan then on the week three, the teacher provide word 'hut', 'nut', 'pin', 'pig', 'mat', and 'hat' with middle-empty-letter. On week two, teacher showed the pictures and mentions the name of the picture and emphasizing on the first letter-sound then asks the student to repeat the teacher. Similar to the week two, on week three teacher also tried to show the picture and mention the name, then ask the students to repeat the teacher. However, on this week, the teacher emphasized the middle letter-sound. The different thing on those two weeks is the level of doing the exercise which is on the week two, students only need to memorize and choose the correct letter. However, on week three, students did not only memorize and choose the letter but also try to write the letter.

While doing the exercise, the researcher see that it would be easier for students to choose the letter without write the letter down on the space given even though teacher give choices and example for the students to help them write it correctly, but they faced difficulty to write down letter ‘a’ and ‘e’. In my opinion, this method is useful if the teacher only focus on the letter-sound not the writing skill. However, because on the week three the teacher combined it with phonics through spelling, it can help the students or introduce the students to write the letter.

### **Onset-rime Phonics**

The next method that used by the teacher in this school is onset-rime phonics on week four. This method helps the students to learn phonics by identifying the onset and the rime of the word (Carnine et al, 2004) and on week four teacher used this method to teach their students. At the first time the teacher explained and gave example about what they do that day. Teacher showed a paper with two pictures and the first letter (onset) of every picture and two empty letters for each pictures. Teacher asked the name of the picture to the students. Then teacher showed the other part of the words (rime) and asked which one of those rime that match with the picture. Then teacher ask some students to choose the correct rime and ask them to stick it with the glue in the correct space. After finished with the word, teacher A showed a paper with ice cream picture and a stick. Teacher give an example to stick the stick in the middle of the ice cream paper and the phonics paper, it became a three-letter-word bookmark. After finished it, teacher call the student one by one to make the bookmark. The way teacher use this method to deliver the material is fun and make the students interested in the activity. However, in my opinion beside this activity, teacher should give another exercise, because the researcher saw that students only imitate the teacher choices and did not want to pronounce the letter-sound.

### **Teacher’s own Method**

In the first week, the teacher used her own method. The method is memorizing words, pictures, and word-sounds because for Indonesian young learners, there are many differences between the word and the pronunciation between Indonesian and English, for example the word ‘cat’, for Indonesian it



would be pronounce as 'cat' but for English version it pronounce as' kæt'. In short, in this step students only learn the word-sound and the word and also the picture. The teacher provide word 'web', 'dog', 'sun', 'cat', 'tap', 'pin', 'hat', and 'bug'. Before started the class, the teacher sing the letter-land song with the students. For the next play, teacher played and paused on the letter 'w', 'd', 's', 'c', 't', 'p', 'h', and 'b' to introduce the sound of those letter. Then teacher showed picture of 'web', 'dog', 'sun', 'cat', 'tap', 'pin', 'hat', and 'bug' then mention the name and ask the students to repeat the words. As the exercise, teacher asked the students for matching the picture and the word. In this step, teacher asked the students to memorize the name of the picture and match it with the word on the right side.

After the observation session, the researcher find that the teacher try to apply different method in every week, because the teacher understand that every students have different way to understand the material given. The whole class cannot understand the material from one method only. Besides that, different with most of the primary school in England that used Synthetic phonics method that UK Government expected to use (The Primary Framework for Literacy and Mathematics, 2006; Rose Review, 2006, as cited in Callinan& Zee, 2010). This school chooses various methods to help students understand about phonics.

## CONCLUSION

This study related with bilingual education program to young learners in reading skill and the aim is to investigate the phonics method used in TK-KB Bethany School Salatiga and the way teacher deliver the material to the students. Before collect the data, the researcher has two research questions to answer my curiosity. The first research question is "What method(s) used in teaching phonics for young learners in TK-KB Bethany?". Then after the observation, the researcher found four methods used for this semester to teach phonics for students. The first method is phonics through spelling in which the teacher gave some three-letter-word with one blank letter and asked the students to write the correct letter in the space given. The next method

used is analytic phonics. The teacher provide pictures and words with one empty letter on every words when working with this method. The third method is onset-rime phonics, the teacher gave two pictures with one letter for every picture then asked students to choose the correct rime for those two first letter. The last method is teacher's own method which is the teacher try to introduce phonics by memorizing words, pictures, letter-by-letter. From the explanation, it can answer the second research question about "what does the teacher do in using that method?"

In short, after the observation of the method use in TK-KB Bethany, the researcher agrees with the variation of phonics method used in this school. Because one method cannot be understood by all learners so teacher need to modify or give various method to the learners.

The limitation of this study is the time limit. The researcher only have six weeks before the long holiday and the next semester there will be different material to introduce reading skill for them. Another reason is the same schedule of the phonics class make the researcher cannot observe those two classes.

For the further research related with this study, the researcher can be try to investigate two school which use different method and try to compare the effectiveness of the method use.

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## Appendix

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL –Week 1		Name of researcher: Wenny A. Lestari		
Name of course: language (phonics)		Name of instructor:		
Class length : 45 minutes		Total number of students: 16 students		
Class time :		Date:		
No	Teacher Types of Question	Present	Absent	Notes
1.	<b>Synthetic phonics</b> - Children learn how to convert letters or letter combinations into sounds, and then how to blend the sounds together to form			

	recognize able words.			
2.	<b>Analytic phonics</b> - Children learn to analyze letter-sounds relationships in previously learned words. They do not pronounce sounds in isolation.			
3.	<b>Analogy phonics</b> - Children learn to use parts of word families they know to identify words they don't know that have similar parts.			
4.	<b>Phonics through spelling</b> - Children learn to segment words into phonemes and to make words by writing letters for phonemes.			
5.	<b>Embedded phonics</b> - Children are taught letter-sound relationships during the reading of connected text. (Since children encounter different letter-sound relationships as they read, this approach is not systematic or explicit.)			
6.	<b>Onset-rime phonics</b> - Children learn to identify the sound of the letter or letters before the first vowel (the onset) in a one-syllable word and the sound of the remaining part of the word (the rime).			
7.	<b>Others</b>			
	<b>Note:</b>			